

### *Progressive Railroading*

On Tuesday, the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority broke ground on a \$243 million multi-modal transportation facility in St. Paul, Minn.

The project includes renovating a 1920s-era Union Depot train station to its original purpose as a transportation hub. The 33-acre site will bring together rail, bus, motor vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

The project is being funded through local, state and federal resources, authority officials said in a prepared statement.

"The Union Depot is a major investment and a long-term commitment," said U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum (D-Minn.), who represents Minnesota's Fourth Congressional District, in a prepared statement. "But in today's global economy, an investment of this scale is not a luxury, it's a necessity."

After construction is completed in 2012, Amtrak will relocate its Empire Builder service from a station in St. Paul's Midway area to Union Depot. The depot also will be a transfer point for Central Corridor light-rail trains as well as Metro Transit, Jefferson Lines and Greyhound intercity and regional bus lines, bicyclists and pedestrians.

In the future, the depot will be a hub for high-speed rail traffic from Chicago.

The last passenger train departed the station in 1971, and in 1974, the depot was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

Using "some of the most innovative environmental and energy efficient techniques available," the project will vie for silver certification through Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), said officials from Mortenson Construction, the lead design-build contractor.